# New Jersey Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance Grant Program

## Program Guidelines

Department of Law & Public Safety
Division of Criminal Justice
State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy

**Revised June 2005** 

#### Victims of Crime Act Program Description

The New Jersey Victims of Crime Act, Victim Assistance Grant Program is administered by the Division of Criminal Justice, State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy. Under this program, subgrants are awarded to the Office of the Prosecutor in each county and to designated governmental and nonprofit agencies which provide services to victims of crime.

#### **Federal Victims of Crime Act Funds**

Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds are generated by assessments levied on offenders of federal crimes and are used to support services to victims of violent crime. VOCA defines a **crime victim** as "a person who has suffered physical, sexual, financial or emotional harm as a result of the commission of a crime."

Services are defined as those efforts that respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims; assist primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after victimization; assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system; and provide victims of crime with a measure of safety such as boarding up broken windows and replacing or repairing locks. VOCA also seeks to encourage public and private nonprofit agencies to commit other resources by requiring matching funds (cash and the value of in-kind services) in conjunction with federal funds to achieve the objectives of this program.

In addition, the VOCA grant assists state, county, and municipal agencies to meet the needs of crime victims and to assist public and nonprofit agencies in providing and/or enhancing services to victims of crime. In doing so, VOCA funds are used to ensure that crime victims are treated with fairness, compassion, and respect by the criminal justice system to prevent secondary victimization by the system. This is consistent with the intent of VOCA's enabling legislation.

The Division of Criminal Justice reserves the right to decline any application for grant funding and to award subgrants in amounts that may be other than requested. Incomplete applications or applications received after the application deadline may jeopardize future funding.

### Victims of Crime Act Matching Funds Requirement

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) subgrant requires that all applicants show 20% in matching funds for the total project. The 20% match may be cash or in-kind services. All matching funds are restricted to the same uses as subgrant funds and must be expended within the subgrant period.

Matching funds must be derived from non-federal funds. The applicant must verify the source of proposed matching funds with the funding source. Many State agencies receive federal funds to pass through to local and nonprofit agencies. Therefore, these funds are federal funds and cannot be used as matching funds for the VOCA subgrants. If the funds provided to the applicant agency are a combination of both state and federal funds, then only the portions which are state funds can be used as the match.

The 20% matching funds are calculated on the total project costs. A simple formula for calculating the required 20% is as follows:

Divide the subgrant funds (federal amount) you are requesting by 4. This gives you the required match. Add the subgrant funds requested plus your match to find the total project cost.

Example: \$20,000 subgrant funds requested (federal amount)

\$20,000 ÷ 4 = \$5,000 (required match) \$20,000 + \$5,000 = \$25,000 (total project cost) \$25,000 x 20% = \$5,000

It is not necessary to provide matching funds for each individual item requested in the budget. Using the above figures as an example, the required \$5,000 in matching funds can be the fringe benefits of subgrant-funded personnel or the salary costs of a nonsubgrant-funded staff person whose activities are related to the project. In this case, the entire matching funds amount would be listed in the Personnel Category.

Agencies are required to maintain documentation on activities related to the source of matching funds as well as subgrant-funded activities.

#### Victims of Crime Act Allowable Costs

The following list is a broad subgrouping of services, activities and costs that are eligible for support with subgrants from the VOCA. This list is not all inclusive. Please see the budget categories section for further information.

- < Services which respond to the immediate emotional and physical needs (excluding medical care) of crime victims, such as crisis intervention, accompaniments to hospitals for medical examinations; hotline counseling; emergency food, clothing, transportation, and shelter; and other emergency services that are intended to restore the victim's sense of dignity and self esteem.</p>
- Services and activities that assist the primary and secondary victims of crime in understanding the dynamics of victimization and in stabilizing their lives after victimization such as counseling, group treatment, and therapy by a qualified professional mental health provider. This includes the evaluation of mental health needs. Parenting skills training and parenting counseling are not considered direct victim services.
- < Services for crime victims within the criminal justice system, such as accompaniments to criminal justice offices and court; transportation to court; child care to enable a victim to attend court; notification of trial dates, case disposition information, and parole consideration procedures; restitution advocacy and assistance with victim impact statements. Emergency transportation costs that enable a victim to participate in the criminal justice system are also allowable provided the victim is not called as a witness.</p>
- Emergency legal assistance such as filing restraining orders and obtaining emergency custody/visitation rights when such actions are directly connected to family violence cases and pertain to the health and safety of the victim. Funds cannot be used to pay for non emergency legal representation such as for divorces or child custody.
- < Services to assist crime victims with managing practical problems created by the victimization. Such services include action on behalf of the victim with other service providers, creditors, or employers at the victim's request; assisting the victim to recover property that is retained as evidence; assisting in filing for compensation benefits; and helping to apply for public assistance.</p>
- < Costs which are necessary and essential to providing services such as prorated costs of rent, telephone service, transportation costs for victims to receive services and local travel expenses for service providers.
- < Costs that are directly related to providing services, such as staff salaries and fringe benefits, the cost of advertising to recruit funded personnel, etc.

**Victims of Crime Act** 

#### **Unallowable Costs and Activities**

Listed below are unallowable costs and activities under this subgrant program:

- < lobbying and administrative advocacy, which include support for victim legislation or administrative reform, whether conducted directly or indirectly; as well as fundraising activities
- < rehabilitative services to offenders or to support services to incarcerated individuals even when the service pertains to the victimization of that individual
- < needs assessments, surveys, evaluations, or studies or for the efforts conducted by individuals, organizations, task forces, or special commissions to study and/or research particular crime victim issues
- < investigative or prosecutorial activities, including witness notification, management activities and expert testimony at a trial or victim protection costs or costs incurred by a victim or witness to testify at a trial
- < crime prevention activities
- < indirect organizational costs such as liability insurance on buildings and vehicle; capital improvements; security guards and body guards; property losses and expenses; real estate purchases; mortgage payments; and construction</td>
- < reimbursement for expenses incurred as a result of a crime such as insurance deductibles, replacement of stolen property, funeral expenses, lost wages, and medical bills; or relocation expenses for crime victims such as moving expenses, security deposits for housing, ongoing rent, and mortgage payments (funds may be used to support staff time in locating resources to assist victims with these expenses)</p>
- < non emergency nursing home care, all home healthcare costs, inpatient treatment costs and hospital care, and other types of non emergency medical and/or dental treatment
- < salaries, fees, and reimbursable expenses associated with administrators, board members, executive directors, consultants, coordinators, and other individuals unless these expenses are incurred while providing services to crime victims
- < development of protocols, interagency agreements and other working agreements
- < costs of sending individual crime victims to conferences
- < parenting skills training or parenting counseling
- < legal representation of victims in divorce or child custody proceedings

<	monitoring court proceedings for compliance with the law and/or monitoring court orders

#### Victims of Crime Act Budget Categories

Listed below is a description of budget categories and allowable expenditures within each category:

**Personnel:** the costs of salaries and hourly wages for staff involved in the project.

#### Allowable expenses:

- < salaries/wages and fringe benefits of project staff who provide direct services to victims.
- < administrative staff hours necessary to meet requirements of the subgrant, such as completing required time and attendance sheets; program documentation, reports, and statistics; and maintenance of victims' records

**Purchase of Services**: contracting for specialized services for crime victims and/or professional administrative services. **Please note**: because contracted services include additional administrative costs, subgrantees should **limit** the use of contracted services

#### Allowable expenses:

- contracted services may be used to provide specialized services only; e.g., assistance in filing emergency restraining orders; emergency psychological or psychiatric services; sign interpretation for the hearing impaired; or printing services
- < contracted services can also include agreements for services with local transportation agencies or parking facilities to enable victims to attend counseling or observe a court proceeding; lunch vouchers purchased from local eateries for victims observing court proceedings</p>
- services purchased to meet auditing requirements must be prorated among all agency/program funding sources
- < malpractice insurance which must be prorated among all agency/program funding sources

**Travel:** program related travel costs incurred by victim services program staff while providing direct services and/or incurred to conduct or attend training. (**Please note:** public agencies may only reimburse travel expenses at the local government rate)

#### Allowable expenses:

- < local travel mileage costs for victim services; funds may not be used to reimburse administrative related travel (i.e., board meetings)
- support costs for staff training and continuing education such as travel, meals, and lodging to attend training within the state or a nearby geographic area (all requests to attend outside training must be submitted to the SOVWA on a standardized training request form and must be approved in writing by the SOVWA). Although funds for outside training may be approved in the application, each individual request must be submitted and approved 10 days in advance of registration.

**Training and Outreach:** costs of materials/programs to assist victims; costs of staff training; continuing education for program staff; and costs to present training or conferences on victim service-related issues. All requests to attend outside training must be submitted to the SOVWA on a standardized training request form and must be approved in advance of registration in writing by the SOVWA even if funds are approved for training in the application.

#### Allowable expenses:

- description of the victimization experience; a lending library should be in place with appropriate record keeping for agency owned educational materials
- < activities and costs for materials related to presentations that are made in schools, community centers, or other public forums and that are designed to identify crime victims and provide or refer them to needed services; included are brochures and presentation materials</p>
- costs associated with staff training to develop and enhance the skills of victim service providers including paid staff and volunteers (funds **cannot** be used for management and administrative training nor can funds be used for training executive directors, board members, and other individuals who do not provide direct services to victims)
- < purchase of materials such as books, training manuals and videos for staff within the organization; costs of a trainer for in service staff development; itemized lists must be submitted to SOVWA for prior written approval.

**Supplies:** project related offices supplies; postage; and computer software not part of a computer purchase (computer software must have prior written approval)

**Equipment**: furniture; computers; copiers; fax machines; beepers; brochure racks; televisions; VCR's; and cameras and two-way mirrors for child interviews **only**. The costs of items not used exclusively for victim related activities must be prorated among all agency/program funding

sources. All requests must be submitted in writing with specs in advance of purchase to the SOVWA even if funds are approved in the application. In addition, any revisions to the approved equipment budget must be approved in advance in writing by the SOVWA.

#### Allowable expenses:

- furniture and equipment purchases must provide or enhance direct services to crime victims and must be justified by the subgrantee
- < the costs of furniture or equipment that makes victims' services more accessible to persons with disabilities, such as a TTY for persons with hearing impairments or a braille reader for persons who are visually impaired</p>
- < purchase or lease vehicles if the subgrantee can demonstrate that such an expenditure is essential to delivering services to crime victims.

**Facilities**: office and shelter space and related costs. Facilities expenses must be prorated among all agency/program funding sources. **Please note:** Applicants requesting funds for facilities must list, in the Budget Narrative, the total agency/program cost for each requested facility line item and explain how the budget request was calculated.

#### Allowable expenses:

- < rental and utility costs pro-rated among all funding sources
- < minor building alterations to make an agency owned building accessible to victims with disabilities must be prorated with other funding sources.

**Victim Aid:** funds for use in emergency situations for victim services. **Please note:** Applicants requesting funds in this budget category must submit a copy of the agency's written policy and procedures regarding the disbursement and accounting of these funds and the eligibility criteria.

#### Allowable expenses:

- emergency transportation costs for victims to receive services or participate in the criminal justice system (if not included in the purchase of service contract for victim transportation)
- < emergency food, clothing and toiletry items for victims in the immediate aftermath of a crime
- < emergency lock repair/replacement; boarding windows
- emergency institutional nursing home costs for disabled or elderly victims when no other accommodations or available shelter services will be safe; funds may only be used to

support short term care of less than seven days (prior written approval before expenditures for nursing home care are mandatory. In cases of emergencies after hours or on weekends, the agencies may use funds, but must contact the SOVWA the next business day).

#### Victims of Crime Act Program Requirements

#### Additionally, each successful applicant must:

- < coordinate victim services with the local service agencies whenever possible to identify and address gaps in service within the county</p>
- < assist crime victims in seeking crime victims compensation benefits
- < maintain appropriate programmatic and financial records that fully disclose the amount and disbursement of funds received
- < maintain required statistics on victims served by race or national origin, sex, age, disability, geographic area and type of victimization within the timetable established by the State</p>
- < specify on any publications, media reports, etc. that the project was funded either all or in part by the Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy</p>
- < maintain confidentiality of client-counselor information, if applicable, as required by State and Federal law
- < promote coordinated public and private efforts within the community to aid crime victims</p>
- compliance with the General Conditions and Assurances and the compliance with the Civil Rights; Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion of Lower Tier Covered Transactions; and Drug-Free Workplace regulations as listed in the Application package
- < use volunteer services unless the SOVWA grants a waiver
- < provide services to victims of Federal crimes on the same basis as victims of State crimes and</p>
- < under the subgrant project, provide services to crime victims free of charge.

#### Victims of Crime Act Reporting Requirements

#### **Quarterly Narrative and Financial Reports**

Subgrantees are required to complete and submit the Quarterly Narrative and Quarterly Financial Reports on subgrant activities each quarter. The reports must be submitted to the State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy *within 15 working days of the close of each quarter*.

A final financial report must be submitted on the Quarterly Financial Report form after all subgrant funds are expended. This report is due *within 15 days of receipt of the final check*.

#### **Quarterly Statistical Reports**

Subgrantees are required to submit statistics on a quarterly basis reporting project activities. The Quarterly Statistical Report should be submitted *within 15 working days of the close of each quarter*.

#### **Subgrant Award Reports**

Any subgrantee receiving federal funds must complete and submit a Subgrant Award Report (SAR) with the Award Contract.

#### **Special Reports**

The SOVWA occasionally receives requests for information from federal and state officials concerning crime victims, special projects and services. Therefore, subgrantees may be asked to supply information related to these requests in a time frame other than required under the various reporting periods.

#### Victims of Crime Act Management of Equipment Purchased with Subgrant Funds

Subgrantees must manage equipment acquired in whole or in part with subgrant funds. Procedures for managing equipment must include the following:

- (1) Property Records which include:
  - < description of the property
  - < serial number or other identification number
  - < source of the property
  - < identification of who holds the title, if applicable
  - < acquisition date
  - < cost of property
  - < percentage of the cost coverage by subgrant funds
  - < location of the property
  - < use and condition of the property and
  - < information on the date of disposal and sale price
- (2) A physical inventory of property must be taken and the results reconciled with property records at least once every two years.
- (3) A control system to ensure adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage or theft of the property. Any loss, damage or theft must be investigated by the subgrantee and a report made to the State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy.
- (4) Adequate maintenance procedures to keep the property in good condition.

Subgrantees may dispose of equipment when the equipment acquired under the subgrant is no longer needed for the original project or program. Disposal of equipment will be made as follows and in accordance with individual agency written procedures: (a) items valued at less than \$5,000 may be retained, disposed of or sold; (b) item valued in excess of \$5,000 may be retained or sold. However if the item valued over \$5,000 is sold, the subgrantee must return to the State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy a percentage of proceeds relative to the percentage of subgrant funds used to purchase the item. All equipment retained by the agency or donated to another agency must be used for victim services.

# Victims of Crime Act Subgrantee Fiscal Control, Accounting and Record Keeping Requirements

Procedures must be established to ensure proper accounting of all subgrant funds and any required matching funds.

#### **Fiscal Control**

- < government agencies must maintain a separate account for subgrant funds with separate accountability of receipts, expenditures, and balances for the subgrant period
- subgrantees must maintain receipt of subgrant funds and documentation (supporting voucher, authorized bill and copy of checks) for all expenditures, including matching funds
- subgrantees must maintain a time-reporting system for personnel charged to the subgrant and any related matching funds (cash or in kind). Subgrantees must maintain payroll authorizations and vouchers and records supporting charges for fringe benefits. The subgrantee must maintain records indicating the hours worked by specific project activity for all subgrant funded staff
- subgrantees must maintain inventory records for equipment bought or rented with subgrant funds or matching funds or contributed through an in kind match. See *Management of Equipment Purchased with Subgrant Funds* in these guidelines.

#### **Accounting Procedures**

Accounting procedures must provide for an accurate and timely recording of receipt of funds by source, expenditures made from such funds and unexpended balances. Controls must be established to certify the accuracy of expenditures charged to subgrant activities. All such documentation must be readily available for review.

#### **Audit Requirements**

Subgrantees must comply with applicable federal, state and local audit requirements and the requirements of OMB Circular Letter A-133 as revised.

#### **Budget Revisions**

Revisions must be requested in advance or during the quarter in which the need to revise the budget becomes apparent. The deadline for any final Budget Revisions to be approved must be submitted prior to the last quarter of the grant period.

- < Any revisions to the approved project budget that *totals \$500 or 5% (whichever is less) of subgrant funds* must be submitted to the SOVWA on a **Budget Revision Request** form for prior written approval
- Any revisions to the approved project budget that *total less than \$500 or 5% (whichever is less)* of subgrant funds may be made without prior written approval by the SOVWA. However, such revision must be documented in the Quarterly Narrative Report and documented on the Quarterly Financial Report with an explanation in the Remarks section
- < Budget revisions within the same line item must be outlined in narrative form and submitted to the SOVWA for approval under the criteria indicated above with the exception of **Personnel** and **Equipment**
- Revisions to the line items for **Personnel** (salaries and fringe) and **Equipment** must be submitted in writing for prior written approval.

#### **Project Income**

All income, including interest earned on subgrant funds or as a result of programs supported by subgrant funds must be reported and be used to support further project activities.

#### **Obligation of Subgrant Funds**

Subgrant funds may not be obligated prior to the effective date or subsequent to the ending date of the subgrant period. Purchase Orders (not Purchase Requisitions) must be posted to the county or agency account by the last day of the subgrant period. The financial report showing these obligations must be sent to the SOVWA within 15 days of the end of the subgrant period. A final report is due 15 days after the receipt of the final payment.

#### **Records Retention**

- < financial records of the subgrantees and contractors, including books of original entry; source documents supporting accounting transactions; the general ledger; subsidiary ledgers; personnel and payroll records; canceled checks; and related documents and records must be retained for a period of at least seven years. The retention period starts from the date of the receipt of the final financial report</p>
- records must be retained beyond the seven-year period if an audit is in progress and/or findings of a completed audit have not been resolved satisfactorily.

#### Victims of Crime Act Grant Subgrantee Official File

Subgrantees are required to maintain a master file for subgrant documents. The following documents must be available for on-site review by DCJ program evaluators and local/federal auditors:

- a. copy of approved application and Final Project Budget
- b. copy of award letter and all correspondence pertaining to the subgrant
- c. the signed Subgrant Award Contract and Special Conditions (if applicable)
- d. copies of all budget revision requests and written approvals from DCJ
- e. copies of all Quarterly Financial reports and the Final Financial report
- f. copies of all Quarterly Narrative Reports and the Annual Statistical Report
- g. copies of all required prior approvals
- h. copies of Subgrant Award Report (SAR)
- i. personnel information
  - copies of all necessary payroll evidence
  - copies of all necessary staff assignment forms
  - copies of all necessary time reports
- i. equipment
  - copies of all purchase orders
  - copies of all receiving documents
  - copies of all bid or competitive quotations information
  - copies of all invoices
  - copies of payments
  - copies of all inventory data

- k. supplies and operating expenses
  - copies of all space contracts and/or certificates
  - copies of all bid information
  - copies of all purchase orders
  - copies of all invoices
  - copies of payments
- 1 travel
  - -copies of all travel authorization
  - -copies of all travel vouchers and receipts
  - -copies of all payments
- m. banking information
  - cash verification
  - receipts documentation
  - check register
  - canceled checks
  - bank statements
- n. audit report
  - -findings
  - -corrective actions